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EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mike Corfield on 3/24/06.

The application has been amended as follows:

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for multicast document printing, the method comprising:
 - receiving document data to be printed at a host, wherein said document data includes a number of copies of a document to be created from the document data;
 - dividing the number of copies into a first batch associated with a first multicast group of at least two corresponding, separate printers and a second batch associated with a second multicast group of at least two corresponding, separate printers;
 - allocating, from the first batch, first subsets to each of the at least two corresponding, separate printers of the first multicast group;
 - allocating, from the second batch, second subsets to each of the at least two corresponding, separate printers of the second multicast group;
 - formatting the document data into a first print job associated with the first multicast group and a second print job associated with the second multicast group;

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embedding instructions specific to each of the corresponding printers of the first multicast group into the first print job to form an entire first print job, the instructions indicating for each of the corresponding printers of the first multicast group the allocated first subset of copies to be printed by that printer;

embedding instructions specific to each of the corresponding printers of the second multicast group into the second print job to form an entire second print job, the instructions indicating for each of the corresponding printers of the second multicast group the allocated second subset of copies to be printed by that printer;

multicasting the entire first print job to the first multicast group and multicasting the entire second print job to the second multicast group;

each of the at least two separate printers of the first multicast group receiving the entire first print job, the entire first print job including routing information comprising a list of printer identifiers and an assigned number of documents for each printer of the first multicast group; and

each of the at least two separate printers of the second multicast group receiving the entire second print job, the entire second print job including routing information comprising a list of printer identifiers and an assigned number of documents for each printer of the second multicast group.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium, said medium containing software code comprising:

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code operable to receive document data to be printed at a host, wherein said document data includes a number of copies of a document to be created from the document data;

code operable to divide the number of copies to be created into a first batch associated with a first multicast group of one or more corresponding, separate printers and a second batch associated with a second multicast group of one or more corresponding, separate printers ~~at least two batches corresponding to at least first and second groups, each group having one or more corresponding, separate printers;~~

code operable to allocate a portion of the first batch of copies to one printer of the first multicast group;

code operable to allocate a portion of the second batch of copies to one printer of the second multicast group;

code operable to format the document data into a first print job associated with the first multicast group batch and a second print job associated with the second multicast group batch;

code operable to embed instructions specific to the allocated printer ~~each of the one or more printers~~ in the first group into the first print job batch and to form an entire first print job batch, the instructions indicating the allocated portion ~~for each of the one or more printers in the first group~~ a number of copies to be printed by that printer;

code operable to embed instructions specific to the allocated printer ~~each of the one or more printers~~ in the second group into the second print job batch and to form an entire second print job batch, the instructions indicating the allocated portion ~~for each of the one or more printers in the second group~~ a number of copies to be printed by that printer; and

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code operable to request separate multicast transmissions of the entire first print job having the instructions specific to the allocated printer to the first group and the entire second print job having the instructions specific to the allocated printer to the second group.

16. (Currently Amended) A network device, comprising:

a port operable to receive document data to be printed at a host, wherein said document data includes a number of copies of a document to be created from the document data to connect to a network and receiving document data to be converted into hard copy output with a predetermined number of copies of a document to be created;

a processor in communication with the port, operable to:

divide the number of copies to be created into a first batch associated with a first multicast group of one or more corresponding, separate printers and a second batch associated with a second multicast group of one or more corresponding, separate printers,

allocate a portion of the first batch of copies to one printer of the first multicast group,

allocate a portion of the second batch of copies to one printer of the second multicast group,

format the document data into a first print job associated with the first multicast group and a second print job associated with the second multicast group,

embed instructions specific to the allocated printer in the first group into the first print job batch and to form an entire first print job batch, the instructions indicating a number of copies to be printed by that allocated printer,

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embed instructions specific to the allocated printer in the second group into the second print job batch and to form an entire second print job batch, the instructions indicating a number of copies to be printed by that allocated printer; and

~~format the document data into two or more entire print jobs, each entire print job comprising a same document and instructions to one or more printers assigning a number of copies of the same document to each of the one or more printers, wherein a sum of copies to be created by each instructed printer is substantially equal to the predetermined number of copies to be created; and~~

a communications port operable to multicast the entire first print job having the instructions specific to the allocated printer to the first group and the entire second print job having the instructions specific to the allocated printer to the second group ~~each entire print job to associated one or more printers.~~

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) ~~A document printing method comprising:~~

~~receiving a multicast network transmission at a networked printer from a store and forward device residing on the network;~~

~~determining whether the multicast network transmission contains an entire print job that is one of a batch of entire print jobs; and when the multicast network transmission~~

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~~contains an entire print job that is one of a batch of entire print job, locating instructions specific to the networked printer in the entire print job and printing at least one copy of a document contained in the entire print job according to the instructions.~~

A printing system comprising:

means for receiving document data to be printed at a host, wherein said document data includes a number of copies of a document to be created from the document data;

means for dividing the number of copies into a first batch associated with a first multicast group of at least two corresponding, separate printers and a second batch associated with a second multicast group of at least two corresponding, separate printers;

means for allocating, from the first batch, first subsets to each of the at least two corresponding, separate printers of the first multicast group;

means for allocating, from the second batch, second subsets to each of the at least two corresponding, separate printers of the second multicast group;

means for formatting the document data into a first print job associated with the first multicast group and a second print job associated with the second multicast group;

means for embedding instructions specific to each of the corresponding printers of the first multicast group into the first print job to form an entire first print job, the instructions indicating for each of the corresponding printers of the first multicast group the allocated first subset of copies to be printed by that printer;

means for embedding instructions specific to each of the corresponding printers of the second multicast group into the second print job to form an entire second print job, the

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instructions indicating for each of the corresponding printers of the second multicast group the allocated second subset of copies to be printed by that printer;

means for multicasting the entire first print job to the first multicast group and multicasting the entire second print job to the second multicast group;

means for each of the at least two separate printers of the first multicast group receiving the entire first print job, the entire first print job including routing information comprising a list of printer identifiers and an assigned number of documents for each printer of the first multicast group; and

means for each of the at least two separate printers of the second multicast group receiving the entire second print job, the entire second print job including routing information comprising a list of printer identifiers and an assigned number of documents for each printer of the second multicast group.